3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

posed of eventually by distribution among the landless and the small landowners (those having not more than 12 acres).[9] This decree was legalized by the Preliminary Land Reform Law of August 18, 1920, and its scope was broadened to permit the republic of Lithuania to assume also the ownership of private forests that were larger than 25 *desimtines* (one *desimtine* is equal to about 2.7 acres).[10] This law was a tentative one in that it contained no provision for the distribution of the expropriated property.

The Land Reform Law in its final draft, consisting of twelve sections and subdivided into seventy-seven paragraphs, was ratified in 1922.[11] The first section outlines the composition of the lands reserved for distribution, defining particularly the land to be taken into the distribution reserve. This action also enabled the state to take over the private property of those who had served in the post-war German armed bands of Bermont and Virgolicz and of those who had worked or were still working against the independence of Lithuania. Estates exceeding 200 acres and owned by one person or one family were also to be taken for land reform purposes.[12] Later the limit was raised to 321 acres (150 hectares). The second section of the Land Reform Law provides that the biggest and least active estates shall be among the first to be appropriated for land reform purposes. The third section defines the types of prospective recipients of the reapportioned land parcels. It states mainly that heads of families of landless peasants, farm laborers, and small landowners are entitled to share in the land distribution. Those farmers, or their lawful successors, from whom land was

[9] Elsbergas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[10] *Vyriausybes Zinios*, Nr. 45 eil. 454 (Government Gazette No. 45, Part 454). Hereafter referred to as V.Z.

[11] *Ibid.*, Nr. 83 eil. 721.

[12] *Ibid.*, Nr. 324 eil. 2218.